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Looking out for No. 1 in SALT-2

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IN THE LAST YEAR, Soviet missile submarines have been dismantled because of limits under SALT-1. We watched as they built these submarines. When they were fitting out for sea trials, we knew it. We watched as they put to sea. And we watched as the submarines were dismantled.

The SALT-2 Treaty, signed in Vienna in June by President Carter, was painstakingly designed and negotiated so that we can adequately verify—by our own independent intelligence capabilities—that the Soviets are living up to its terms.

We use photographic satellites, other satellite-borne sensors, powerful radars and numerous other means, operating from air, land and sea, to survey the Soviet Union on a regular, thorough and accurate basis. We do not depend on any one source exclusively. If we have even the slightest suspicion of a violation we can raise it with the Soviets at a special commission that has been set up for this purpose. The ultimate sanction, if our concerns are not satisfied, is to repudiate the treaty and take whatever steps we believe necessary to protect our security. The treaty itself provides for this.

I find our intelligence capabilities truly astonish-

ing, especially since when I began my military career in World War II, we seldom knew what was happening 600 yards behind enemy lines, let alone 6,000 miles away.

Today, it's vastly different. We know where Soviet missile subs are built. We count their missile tubes as they are installed and can determine the type of missile they are designed for.

We know the location and type of all Soviet ICBM launchers. We carefully observe missile flight tests, and we know whether a missile is tested with one warhead or with more than one. We can count the Soviet missile reentry vehicles as they reenter the atmosphere. We monitor the conversion of older

ICBM launchers. Well before conversion is finished, we know what type of missile it will contain.

The treaty bans deliberate concealment which interferes with verification, and it bans interference with our verification techniques. It also contains precise definitions and special rules to aid our verification efforts. If SALT is rejected and we lose these provisions, it would be harder to collect information on Soviet weapons, although our need for the information would be no less. No military leader likes to plan with less, rather than more, information about a potential adversary—that's one reason why I'm for SALT.

As in any intelligence effort, we can monitor some systems with greater precision than others. But I know of no way the Soviets could cheat in SALT on a scale large enough to pose significant military risk, or adversely affect the strategic balance, and not get caught. The bottom line is that now and in the future we can safeguard the strategic balance and our security against Soviet violations of SALT.

(Retired Gen. Seignious is director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.)